



## The E-Newsletter of the Senate Majority Caucus

February 3, 2004

Volume 1, Issue 2



**Members of the Senate Majority Caucus gather in the Senate Chamber to sign the bills that make up the Joint House-Senate Package of measures for the 2004 Session.**

## Majority Senators Endorse Joint House-Senate Legislative Package for 2004

The 2004 Democratic Majority Package, the product of a new level of collaboration between the two Houses of the Legislature, offers a blueprint for change in three critical areas: education, the ice epidemic, and prescription drug costs. The education package endorses a “weighted student formula” system, in which money is allocated based on the unique learning needs of each student. Governance for public schools will be placed in the hands of the communities they serve. Voters will be offered the opportunity to reconfigure the Board of Education system to make it more representative and accountable.

The package of measures for dealing with the ice epidemic builds on the findings and recommendations of the Joint House-Senate Task Force on Ice

and Drug Abatement that were released in January 2004. It includes tougher laws to fight drug dealers and manufacturers, expanded prevention and treatment programs, and a “civil commitment” process that protects families by allowing them to get a family member into treatment as an alternative to incarceration.

The prescription drug package targets the rising cost of prescription drugs by refining and amending the existing Hawaii Rx Plus program, using the purchasing power of consumers to negotiate lower prices and rebate agreements from pharmaceutical companies.

The full text of the 2004 Democratic Majority Package is published on the Senate Majority website at [www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/).

## Department of Education Chief Offers Broad-Based Vision for Reform

Department of Education Superintendent Pat Hamamoto spoke to both Houses of the Hawaii Legislature on Wednesday, January 28 to share her expertise on public education in Hawaii. She drew a standing ovation from a packed gallery with the words, “Hold me accountable and expect results. But first, you must give me the tools and you must give me the space to do my job.”

She offered a series of concrete proposals that focused on student achievement and increased control of school operations at the local level. Children will be expected to read by the end of third grade. Parents will be given incentives to get involved in their schools and kept informed of their children’s progress through a more “user-friendly” report card.

On the governance issue, she said “I believe education reform in Hawai‘i is only going to happen at the most basic level—at the school and in the classroom. I am opposed to additional Boards of Education that add more layers of bureaucracy between our state school board and the schools. More school boards will not improve student achievement. I will forever champion the most direct and unfettered route from that state governing board to that individual school and ultimately the child in the classroom.”

**SENATE MAJORITY WEBSITE**  
[www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/)

## Sen. English Finds Change in the Air at Kalaupapa

Kalaupapa, the site of a Hansen's Disease settlement on Molokai's North Shore, is changing with the times, and community members are working to preserve its unique legacy. A new not-for-profit organization, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, has been formed with that purpose in mind. That's why Sen. J. Kalani English (D-East Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i) found himself trekking down the winding trail toward Kalaupapa one early morning a few days before the opening of this year's legislative session. "The mules were booked," he said, "and I was determined to attend Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa's Board meeting. It's inspiring to witness this level of community involvement – especially in this beautiful and historically significant setting."

The remote Kalaupapa peninsula was established as a home for Hansen's Disease patients in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. From 1873 until his death from the disease in 1889, Father Damien deVeuster pioneered the humane treatment of Hansen's Disease victims and became a worldwide symbol of compassion and humanity. Over the course of a century, some 9,000 Hansen's Disease patients were kept confined and isolated at Kalaupapa. The former settlement was designated as a National Historical Park in 1980.



*Senator English looks out over Moloka'i's rugged coastline from the trail head above Kalaupapa.*

### Senate Majority Website Offers Expanded Coverage

The Senate Majority website offers an opportunity to keep current with issues and events during the 2004 Legislative Session, with speeches, articles, and news updates at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/>.



*Senator Willie Espero (D-Ewa Beach, Waipahu) talks with Ewa Elementary students as they visit the State Capitol.*

*Call to Order is a bi-weekly publication of the Hawaii Senate Majority Caucus.*  
[www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/senmaj/)

## Funds released for Maui Air Ambulance

Members of the House and Senate Maui delegation are celebrating the release of funds for an air ambulance that will bring much-needed emergency care to remote areas of Maui County. Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair of the Senate Health Committee, said, "The issue of parity in medical services for outlying regions of our state has long been a priority issue for me and for the people of my district. This is a happy day for the people of Maui County and for all the people of Hawaii."



*Rep. Sol Kaho'ohalahala, Sen. J. Kalani English, and Sen. Rosalyn Baker were among those who worked hard to bring air ambulance service to Maui County.*